

CALIFORNIA'S VISION FOR A GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Reliable, accurate geospatial data at the fingertips of California's citizens is essential to protecting public health, safety, and property, and for promoting a quality environment and vibrant economy. Much of what affects quality of life manifests itself at the local level: health services, fire protection, law enforcement, business development, road maintenance, utilities and other government-operated infrastructure and services affect citizens daily. These activities have a geospatial component and all are improved with the intelligent application of Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

GIS is very data intensive, and quality data are expensive to develop and maintain. Recognizing the great value that results from shared access to the same high quality data and the potential for significant efficiencies from pooling resources and working together, the California GIS Council (Council) facilitates the coordination, communication, and cooperation needed to pursue common geospatial data initiatives. This is especially important for data sets like property parcels and roads where collaboration among a large number of participants and stakeholders is essential. Costs and benefits must be shared if key data are to be developed, maintained and made available.

Regional GIS collaboratives representing local government agencies, tribes, special districts, public utilities, private sector interests and academic institutions have an especially important role to play on the Council. These collaboratives are crucial to bridging local and state interests and perspectives. California is blessed and challenged by the fact that it is unusually large and geographically diverse with subsequent wide-ranging and sometimes divergent needs and interests. Communicating and developing consensus across this varied physical and political landscape requires a regional approach with sustained State and Federal support.

California's GIS Council provides an effective mechanism to build consensus among the diverse business needs represented by city, county, regional, State and Federal participants and make recommendations concerning geospatial policies to California's Geospatial Information Officer (GIO). The GIO will work with the California GIS Council to sponsor an integrated State Geospatial Data Service that will define the data architecture, systems, standards, and processes and coordinate the availability of geospatial data used by state agencies.

Almost all of that we do is location based to one extent or another. Geography is the common "language of place" and GIS provides the tools that will enable us to model our world, understand its processes natural and human caused, and comprehend how our actions as individuals and a society will affect our future.